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NBC Briefing

28 January 1954

CHINESE NATIONALIST MILITARY PICTURE

1. Strength

A. Ground Forces:

1. 450,000 troops, of whom 350,000 are combat forces.
2. Organized into 12 armies, 28 infantry divisions, 11 artillery regiments, 4 armed groups, 1 parachute group, 3 fort commands including 7 coast artillery regiments, 7 officer combat regiments, 1 tank battalion.
3. Bulk of combat forces on Formosa, lesser groupings on offshore islands.
4. US has recently supplied large quantities of artillery, small arms and ammunition; signal and engineering equipment still in very short supply.

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B. Navy: 36,600 men; 1 destroyer, 34 patrol vessels, 13 mine vessels, more than 100 miscellaneous small craft, in fair over-all material condition. There are an additional 11,000 Marines.

C. Air Force: 68,000 men; 566 aircraft: 304 of these are in tactical units -- 1 medium bomber group, 1 light bomber group, 4 fighter groups, 2 transport groups, 1 reconnaissance squadron. US has supplied

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ARMY review completed.

DIA review completed.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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several jet trainers and about two dozen F84G jet fighters are being delivered.

- D. Guerrillas: Possibly 30,000 organized guerrillas on Nationalist-held offshore islands, some with commando training and experience; possibly 25,000 guerrillas in scattered units on mainland, but few of these controlled by Nationalists.

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II. Quality

A. Ground forces:

1. American military observers, both those on spot and those visiting, agree that Chinese in ranks are good material, in good physical shape and with high standard of individual training, and could stand up to Communist forces if properly equipped and led.
2. They also agree that equipment is inadequate, that logistic support is especially poor, and that serious weaknesses exist in unit and combined training.
3. They point out that the troops are aging (at least 27 for enlisted men and 28 for officers), that there are too many officers, and that leadership above the division level is generally incompetent or inexperienced [redacted] 25X6
[redacted] although the commanding general, Sun Li-jen, is believed to be quite competent. 25X6

- B. Navy: Suffered great losses in men and vessels to Communists in 1949; vessels do not operate together effectively, there is no harbor-defense equipment, officers are generally reluctant to go to sea, and the commanding officer, [redacted] 25X6
[redacted] 25X6

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C. Air Force: Morale and leadership are good, but combat effectiveness is low due to inadequate equipment, spare parts and supplies (including petroleum), poor storage and maintenance, and limited operational training and experience.

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III. Capabilities

- A. Ground Forces: Incapable of withstanding, without outside aid, a prolonged and determined assault by Chinese Communist forces, and incapable of major operations against the China mainland without large-scale support.
- B. Navy: Incapable of defense of Formosa and not prepared for sustained combat. Armed junks and small naval vessels provide limited gunfire support for guerrilla ground forces and harass Chinese Communist coastal shipping, including vessels of foreign registry.
- C. Air Force: Incapable of providing effective air defense of Formosa against full-scale attack by Chinese Communist air force.

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IV. Political Officer System

- A. American observers have particularly noted the impairment of the combat efficiency of the armed forces by the pervasive political officer system. General Hull has recently described it as potentially "disastrous."
- B. This system is under the direction of Chiang Ching-kuo, the Generalissimo's son, who was Russian-educated and has modeled the system on the Soviet political officer system. It gives the political officers authority which in practice exceeds that of the military commander and makes the latter's task very difficult.
- C. The political officer system has been somewhat modified in deference to suggestions by the US military advisory group, but the Nationalists appear determined to retain it in substantially its present form.

V. American Aid

- A. About \$383,000,000 to armed forces during FY 1951-1953. More than \$300,000,000 in aid scheduled for FY 1954.
- B. US military aid program has been criticized by US military officers on Formosa and by journalists visiting the island as being too small for a serious offensive effort at any time against the China mainland, while being larger than needed for a purely defensive effort.

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